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## **CIVIL DEFENSE IN POLAND – TRANSFORMATION PROCESS AFTER 1989. CURRENT STATE AND MODERNIZATION PROPOSALS**

**ABSTRACT:** Civil defense in Poland is one of the entities responsible for the security of the civilian population in the situation of both the threat of external military security of the state and internal threats caused by natural disasters and industrial disasters. However, its formula is outdated, and reforms carried out over the decades, especially after the political transformation, did not bring satisfactory results. The purpose of the article is, by using a method of critical analysis of the literature on the subject as well as normative acts and post-audit reports, a synthetic presentation of the process of these changes, an indication of how they affected the current condition of the Civil Defense and proposing a solution based on proven foreign standards, after being adapted to domestic conditions, will allow for the restoration of CD functionality and will unambiguously end long-term competence disputes related to the possibility of using it in an emergency.

**KEYWORDS:** civil protection, civil defense, crisis management

### **OBRONA CYWILNA W POLSCE – PROCES TRANSFORMACJI PO 1989 ROKU. STAN OBECNY I PROPOZYCJE MODERNIZACJI**

**ABSTRAKT:** Obrona cywilna w Polsce jest jednym z podmiotów odpowiedzialnych za bezpieczeństwo ludności cywilnej w sytuacji wystąpienia zarówno zagrożenia zewnętrznego militarnego bezpieczeństwa państwa jak i niebezpieczeństw wewnętrznych, wywołanych przez klęski żywiołowe i katastrofy przemysłowe. Jej formuła jest jednak przestarzała, zaś dokonywane na przestrzeni dziesięcioleci, zwłaszcza zaś po transformacji ustrojowej, próby reform nie przyniosły zadowalających rezultatów. Celem artykułu jest, poprzez wykorzystanie

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metody krytycznej analizy literatury przedmiotu oraz aktów normatywnych i raportów pokontrolnych, syntetyczne ukazanie procesu tych zmian, wskazanie jak wpłynęły one na obecną kondycję Obrony Cywilnej oraz zaproponowanie rozwiązania, które opierając się na sprawdzonych wzorcach zagranicznych, po odpowiednim zaadoptowaniu ich do warunków krajowych, pozwoli na przywrócenie funkcjonalności OC oraz jednoznacznie zakończy długoletnie spory kompetencyjne związanych z możliwością jej wykorzystania w sytuacji zagrożenia.

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** Ochrona ludności, obrona cywilna, zarządzanie kryzysowe

## INTRODUCTION

A characteristic feature of the security environment in each of its dimensions over the past decades is its ongoing process of change. It is caused by the continuous evolution of the results affecting each of the areas of social existence around the world. A growing challenge is to provide an environment in which there is a security risk and would be available in advance so that action can be taken to counteract their escalation. If it is necessary, solutions limiting them to the minimum extent of impact should be developed. These integrated functional objectives in each of the countries, the various civil protection systems used, which operate primarily in the structure of crisis management systems (CMS) and Civil Defense (CD). The second of these subjects made the object of research interests. The main problem of the research is the question: How is the process of reforming civil defense in Poland after 1989 affected its functionality? The problem posed in this way is considered if it is a diagnosis of OC action in a situation, as well as an indication of shortcomings in this respect, as well as when trying to propose framework elements of OC evolution aimed at their elimination.

## THEORETICAL DIMENSION OF CIVIL DEFENSE

Reflections on the place of civil defense<sup>3</sup> in the civil protection system in Poland should start with analyzing the ways of perceiving it, and thus defining it. Particular attention from the point of view of functionality should be paid to formal definitions contained in legal acts in Poland.

Interpretation of civil defense is possible in three dimensions of its functioning. The first is related to its perception in the category of humanitarian tasks aimed at protecting civilians. This type of interpretation is formally reflected in the Additional Protocol I of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, where civil defense is defined as “fulfilling (...) humanitarian tasks aimed at protecting civilians against the dangers arising from military operations or

<sup>3</sup> The article uses a double spelling of the name. “Civil Defense” means its organizational dimension (management bodies, strength structure - Civil Defense formations), while “Civil Defence” means a set of humanitarian tasks implemented in accordance with the provisions of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, which may be performed by entities that are not an organizational part of civil liability, but, for example, during armed conflict they enjoy as “civil defense organizations” the mandate of inviolability guaranteed by international humanitarian law of armed conflict.

natural disasters, and overcoming their immediate consequences, as well as ensuring the conditions necessary for survival. Humanitarian tasks within the meaning of the Protocol (...) include: warning service, evacuation, preparation and organization of shelters, service of blackout measures, rescue, medical services, including first aid and religious care, fight against fires, detection and marking of danger zones, decontamination and other similar protective measures, providing ad hoc rooms and supplies, ad hoc assistance for restoring and maintaining order in disaster-stricken areas, ad hoc restoration of necessary public services, ad hoc burial of the deceased and assistance in saving goods necessary for survival”<sup>4</sup>. It should be emphasized that this approach combines the functional and material dimension of civil defense<sup>5</sup>.

The dimension of the humanitarian mission, reflected in the provisions of international law, implies the performance of tasks for the protection of the population by state entities. They usually create institutional forms of Civil Defense, which, operating in the public administration system, constitute another organizational approach to civil liability. Civil Defense has management bodies and executive structures working to protect and save civilians. In Poland, the institutional dimension of CD is reflected in the purpose-specific definition contained in the Act on the universal obligation to defend the Republic of Poland. According to it: “Civil defense aims to protect people, workplaces and public utilities, cultural goods, rescue and provide assistance to victims during the war as well as cooperate in combating natural disasters and environmental threats and removing their effects”<sup>6</sup>.

However, such a formula, even the most structurally developed and perfectly prepared to perform its tasks will not be fully efficient without meeting the requirement of conscious and competent public involvement. The spontaneous but justified by the quasi-objective perception of threats need for self-organization of citizens to protect themselves in the event of threats is the third, most primary dimension of civil defense.

Of course, the presented dimensions of the perception of civil defense are an incentive for broader theoretical considerations that allow the development of definitions of civil liability that are comprehensive, systemic, structural or functional<sup>7</sup>.

It should also be noted that some authors postulate the attachment of the term civil defense to a situation of threat of war and a time of non-military crisis, at the same time postulating that it coexists with the term civil protection, which would specify actions for civil security in peacetime and in preparation for responding to threats<sup>8</sup>. This approach is also characteristic of some normative documents of the European Union, which go a step further

<sup>4</sup> Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 regarding the protection of victims of international armed conflicts, Geneva, 8 June 1977, art. 61.

<sup>5</sup> See more: W. Kitler, A. Skrabacz, *Civilian Security, Defense Knowledge Society*, Warsaw 2010, p. 77.

<sup>6</sup> Act of November 21, 1967. on the universal obligation to defend the Republic of Poland (as amended), art. 137. (Journal of Laws of 1967 No. 44 item 220).

<sup>7</sup> More: R. Kalinowski, *Civil Defense in Poland*, Siedlce 2017, p. 222.

<sup>8</sup> G. Sobolewski, *Systemic Approach to Civil Protection in Poland, Safety and fire technology*, Vol. 54 Issue 2, 2019, s. 123.

and completely abandon the term civil defense. Regardless of the naming, it is important to ensure the optimal functionality of the organization to ensure security.

## **ASSESSMENT OF CD EFFICIENCY IN THE CONTEXT OF LEGISLATIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES**

Characteristics of the efficiency of civil defense in Poland must be based on the perspective of these three approaches presented in the context of the genesis of the organization. It should be remembered that CD, operating under this name since 1973, was also the heir to the traditions of its ancestors from the 1920s, which included: the Air and Gas Defense League, the Off-Road Antiaircraft Defense and the Universal Self Defense. These organizations have undoubtedly had a significant impact on the approach to civil liability, both by public administration, services and other rescue entities as well as citizens, and determined the formula for its operation<sup>9</sup>. This resulted in subsequent difficulties in adapting the Civil Defense to the requirements of international law. Their source was primarily the specific perception of this organization. Even in scientific and popular-scientific articles one can meet the thesis that CD was established to support the operation of the armed forces, only in the event of an armed conflict. There is some truth in this approach, but it is a mental shortcut. Civil Defense, of course, cooperated and cooperates with the armed forces in the protection of civilians in situations of war danger, moreover, for many years its management was within the structures of the Ministry of National Defense, however, it in no way supported the military operations of the army, as this would be contrary to the provisions of Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols. In fact, it is sub-units or troops of the armed forces that can become “civil defense organizations”, which, under international law, means that they will carry out humanitarian tasks after disarmament, and not inversely – civil defense will become part of the armed forces.

Another example of an erroneous view of civil defense was the negation of the possibility of using it to eliminate the dangers of peace time, while the Additional Protocol we cited above clearly emphasizes the possibility of its operation also in the event of natural or industrial disasters. The abovementioned difficulties, consolidated over the years, resulting in stereotypical and even wrong understanding of the essence of CD, stood in the way of thorough revitalization of this institution after the political transformation.

Ratification of the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions on October 23, 1991 was a great opportunity. This forced the preparation of a new legal basis for the functioning of civil defense in Poland, and thus the modernization of its organizational and task structures. A series of legal acts, adopted on September 28, 1993, which were to comprehensively regulate civil liability in Poland did not, however, bring the expected results. In general,

<sup>9</sup> An assessment of their functional efficiency can be found, among others, in the Civil Defense in Poland, Economic Intelligence Report, CIA / RR ER 60-24, September 1960. It indicates that the structures of the then TOPL are prepared primarily for the possibility of a nuclear attack, but the scope this preparation is not entirely satisfactory.

matters of civil defense were specified in amendments to the law on the general obligation to defend the Republic of Poland. According to its uniform text, which finds its practical reflection in the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of September 28, 1993 on the detailed scope of activities of the Head of National Civil Defense, heads of civil defense of provinces and municipalities, the principles and mode of management, their coordination of preparation and implementation of civil defense projects, the head of NCD<sup>10</sup> remained subordinate to the Ministry of National Defense<sup>11</sup>, which did not improve the image or perception of civil defense by citizens. In the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of September 28, 1993 in the case of civil defense, much needed regulations regarding the scope of CD tasks were found, but their construction distorted the idea of its practical use in the event of non-military threats. In the document they were divided into periods of war and time of peace. At the same time, undertakings related to the implementation of practical protection and rescue of the population were associated with the threat of war, leaving only activities related to planning and organization, training, dissemination campaigns and preparation of civilians for participation in universal self-defense for the time of peace. This provision was in dissonance, with another paragraph of the regulation, which emphasized the possibility of cooperation between civil defense in combating natural disasters and environmental threats and removing their effects in peacetime. The question arose as to what tasks civil liability is entitled to perform in such a situation, since those determined for peacetime seem to be useless in a real threat situation, whereas actual protection and rescue projects could only be carried out during the war.

The set of ordinances regulating CD tasks at that time was supplemented by the Ordinance of the Council of Ministers of September 28, 1993 on universal self-defense of the population. Its purpose was to prepare the public with the participation and substantive assistance of institutional forms of Civil Defense for self-organization, self-help and self-rescue in the event of various threats. This provision, although in principle was correct and had fairly transparent content, proved to be a dead law that was never enacted and was not subject to any form of enforcement.

This “prepared” legal basis for civil liability was reflected in the institutional approach in the form of Civil Defense inspectorates located in public administration entities and the forces necessary for action, which were civil defense formations. Their insufficient efficiency was shown and stigmatized before changes were made during the firefighting at Kuźnia Raciborska in 1992<sup>12</sup>. It has not improved significantly after the new law entered into force. The organization’s indolence was confirmed by the liquidation of the flood effects in 1997. As a consequence, the subordination of the CD department was changed from the Ministry of National Defense to the Ministry of the Interior and Administration. They also began to look

<sup>10</sup> National Civil Defense.

<sup>11</sup> § 4; J. Suwart, *An Outline of Civil Defense in Poland*, Warsaw 1997, p. 200.

<sup>12</sup> Formations used during the liquidation of the effects of fire were not prepared in terms of content or equipment for the tasks entrusted to them.

for a way to “heal” the organization. It became quite difficult due to the fact that two new concepts appeared in the internal security environment: the creation of the Crisis Management System and the National Rescue and Firefighting System (NFRS). The strongly lobbied idea of creating a NFRS as a rescue entity modeled on Western models of crisis management and cooperating with it, implementing a crisis response in the field of rescue and protection of population and state structures, has called into question the desirability of further functioning of civil defense, especially in the face of its poor substantive preparation and low level of personnel and equipment completion.

Attempts to liquidate civil liability, although unsuccessful, did not become an incentive for its management to undertake substantive discussion and perform specific actions to increase its efficiency. When in 1998 the Chief Commander of the State Fire Service became the Chief of National Civil Defense, it was easy to see that steps had been taken to reduce rescue role and, as a consequence, complete liquidation. Lack of new formations and negligible financial and training support of existing ones, holding idle in every aspect of substitute military service under civil liability in fire departments are only two of the most vivid examples of depreciating the role of Civil Defense as a rescue entity. Later, starting from 2004, putting the head of the CD undersecretary of state in the Ministry of Interior and Administration did not improve its situation in the broader perspective. After the long-term lack of the advisory body of the new supervisor in the department’s structures, it was proposed that the General Headquarters of the State Fire Service performed this role, which closed the vicious circle of actions around CD. From 2008 the concept of performing the function of head of NCD by the Chief Commander of the State Fire Service was restored, which delayed the reform process until 1998.

Attempts at legislative changes carried out in 2002-2004 also proved to be uncoordinated and chaotic. First, the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of June 25, 2002 on the detailed scope of activities of the Head of National Civil Defense, heads of civil defense of provinces, poviats and communes was adopted. It sanctioned, inter alia, the previously indicated change in the assignment of the departmental civil liability. However, a completely incomprehensible step taken in 2003 was the repeal of the Act on the universal obligation to defend the Republic of Poland art. 140, which states: “The Council of Ministers shall determine, by regulation:

1. tasks of civil defense and the duties and powers of government administration bodies and other state bodies and institutions, local government bodies, entrepreneurs and other organizational units, as well as social organizations, with particular regard to the principles of planning and organizing rescue operations, monitoring of threats, training and dissemination civil defense issues,
2. rules for combating natural disasters, catastrophes and environmental threats and removing their effects by civil defense, considering in particular the principles of cooperation with other services and competences in this field,



3. general principles for the creation and destination of civil defense formations, including in particular their model organizational structures and subordination, and the principles of equipping them with the necessary equipment and resources”<sup>13</sup>.

The result of this step was the repeal of the Regulation on civil defense, which was the only act of national law containing the task scope of CD. Since then, their only interpretation has been the ratified Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions.

Further attempts of a kind of “experiment” in civil defense made it difficult to adopt the Act of April 26, 2007 on crisis management. Despite significant problems with the adoption of this document and the creation of various versions of it, which were rejected at various stages of the legislative process, there appeared an entity, which was an alternative to civil liability. And its actual further existence was marked by stagnation and all possible and unpredictable difficulties in action. This is perfectly illustrated by the reports of the National Headquarters of the State Fire Service (NHSFS) and the reports of the Supreme Audit Office. The titles of documents prepared by the Fire Brigade say a lot about the condition of civil defense. Until 2012, the reports were entitled “Assessment of the state of preparation of the Civil Defense in Poland”. However, already the report for 2013 was entitled “Assessment of preparations in the field of civil protection and civil defense in Poland for 2013”. This difference can be interpreted as clear evidence of the dispersion of tasks related to civil protection between civil defense and the crisis management system, which uses mainly NFRS forces as responders. As a result, projects related to the protection of civilians can no longer be identified solely with the Civil Defense organization, primarily due to its insufficient preparation. However, on the title pages of reports prepared after 2012 there was the entry: “Diagnosis of the preparation of civil defense organs and formation, other entities, as well as the population, to carry out tasks in the conditions of external threat to national security and during war, together with the conclusions”. This clause calls into question the earlier interpretation of the change of report title. At the same time, it raises doubts as to the nature of the data contained in the document. Since the scope of preparations presented relates to the “W” period, whether at least the presented system of warning and alerting people about threats will not be used in peacetime. If not, what will replace it? In addition, with this interpretation of the data, the authors of the document explicitly negate the possibility of using the potential of civil liability in rescue operations related to the elimination of natural disasters and catastrophes, which is contrary to the provisions of ratified international law.

Regardless of the interpretation of the intentions of the State Headquarters of the State Fire Service, the content of the reports confirms the thesis of poor preparation of civil defense in Poland. They clearly show that the state of civil liability is systematically deteriorating, which should not be surprising given the actions, it has been subjected over several decades, described above. According to the cited documents, existing regulations in the field of

<sup>13</sup> Act of 29 October 2003 amending the act on the general obligation to defend the Republic of Poland and amending certain other acts.

functioning of civil defense in Poland do not allow for effective coordination of its activities. They sound ambiguous and regulate key CD issues in a chaotic and uncoordinated manner. At first glance, there is the abovementioned lack of a national document containing the scope of tasks of the Civil Defense, including the clearly-articulated possibility of performing protective and rescue actions both during war, natural disasters and environmental threats. The Regulation of 25 June 2002 on the detailed scope of activities of the Head of National Civil Defense, heads of civil defense of provinces, poviats and communes, is of general and unspecified character. It articulates the scope of activities of heads of civil liability at particular levels of administration, without specifying who and to what extent is responsible for their implementation<sup>14</sup>. In such a state, however, one can find a simple explanation that the heads of civil liability, starting with the Chief of Civil Defense of the Country do not have their own executive apparatus<sup>15</sup>, which prevents them from working effectively. In addition, except for the head of the NCD, they are also competent authorities in matters of crisis management, in accordance with the provisions of the Act of 26 April 2007 on crisis management. Therefore, they carry out projects in the field of civil protection under the CMS, using the structures of the crisis management system located in public administration. In crisis management departments, one can often find lectures or individual specialists in the field of civil defense, but their ability to act in the context of their decision power and material and technical potential remain negligible, and the scope of activity is duplicated with the enterprises of the crisis management system. It is hardly surprising, then, that CD cells are not taken seriously and questions arise about the legitimacy of maintaining such structures. In the case of the head of the NCD, another problem can also be noticed: limited possibilities of managerial influence on the heads of Civil Defense at other levels, including interference in the planning of their budgets<sup>16</sup>. This is due to the fact that both the Head of Civil Defense (Chief Commander of the State Fire Service) and voivods (heads of civil liability of provinces) are appointed by the Prime Minister on the request of the minister competent for internal affairs and administration. Therefore, there is no service relationship between them except that in the scope of civil liability, which in practice is simply ignored.

The above-mentioned shortcomings are reflected in serious disadvantages of the planning system, manifested in the lack or incorrect development of civil defense plans. The report of the Supreme Audit Office cited above explicitly states that the last National Civil Defense Plan was founded in 1995. And although the provisions in force regarding the preparation of the plan indicate the entities responsible for its preparation<sup>17</sup> in the form of civil defense authorities at individual levels and the relevant offices serving them, considering the problems

<sup>14</sup> Assessment of preparations for civil protection and civil defense in Poland for 2017 Office for Civil Protection and Civil Defense of the State Headquarters of the State Fire Service, Warsaw 2018, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Civil protection as part of crisis management and civil defense, Information on the results of controls, Reg. No. 147/2018 / P / 17/039 / KPB, Department of Order and Internal Security, Warsaw 2018, p. 20.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>17</sup> Guidelines of the Head of National Civil Defense of December 27, 2011 on the principles of developing a civil defense plan for voivodships, poviats and communes



mentioned above in their operation, it is difficult to expect effective preparation of these documents<sup>18</sup>. In addition, there is inconsistency in this matter between national law and the official act of the Head of the NCD. In the Regulation of 25 June 2002 on the detailed scope of activities of the Head of National Civil Defense, heads of civil defense of voivodships, poviats and communes, the need to develop civil liability plans by economic entities is indicated<sup>19</sup>, while the Guidelines of the Head of National Civil Defense of December 21, 2011 on the principles of developing a civil defense plan for voivodships, poviats and communes require them to develop only implementation cards of civil liability tasks<sup>20</sup>.

Serious deficiencies in planning are complemented by the low level of preparation of civil defense formations. It is pointed out that they are not adequately prepared to respond to threats specific in their area of operation and they are provided with incomplete and outdated equipment, inconsistent with the norms set by the head of the NCD<sup>21</sup>. Therefore, their action in the event of a threat to the external security of the state, as well as events bearing the signs of natural disasters and environmental threats would be marginal.

Another problem associated with formations is the lack of new members, which is primarily due to the suspension of conscription for basic military service, which replacement form was the service in the Civil Defense. The advanced age of the members of the formation with appropriate mobilization assignments and the lack of supplementation of the composition causes that a significant part of the CD forces will be dissolved over time.

Lack of strength, causes the problems with the practical performance of CD tasks. Reports of the Main Command of the State Fire Service indicate that in addition to monitoring threats, warning and alerting as well as training projects addressed mainly to public administration officials, there are simply no other tasks related to collective and individual protection of civilians. The shelter potential is negligibly small<sup>22</sup> and does not actually exist, and preparations related to the evacuation of people for the last time were included in the NHSFS report for 2011<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> It is worth to signal at this point a certain inaccuracy in the NIK Report cited, which formulates the conclusion that "The applicable provisions indicate only the entity responsible for agreeing on the draft of such a plan, but they do not specify the authority obliged to develop it" (p. 21). This is not true, because the guidelines of the Chief of National Civil Defense of December 21, 2011. on the principles of developing a civil defense plan for voivodships, poviats and communes clearly define the entities and offices responsible for their development.

<sup>19</sup> § 2, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> § 3.

<sup>21</sup> Standards in the field of supplying civil defense bodies and formations with equipment, technical means and uniforms necessary to perform civil defense tasks and their framework organizational structures and basic tasks, Warsaw, March 2014.

<sup>22</sup> According to the latest available data, the potential of protective structures in Poland is enough to hide 1.29% of the population in shelters and 2.17% in hiding. Source: Assessment of preparations in the field of civil protection and civil defense in Poland for 2018, the Office for Civil Protection and Civil Defense of the State Headquarters of the State Fire Service, Warsaw, p. 20.

<sup>23</sup> Assessment of the state of preparation of the Civil Defense in Poland. As at December 31, 2011, the Office for Civil Protection and Civil Defense of the National Headquarters of the State Fire Service, Warsaw 2012, p. 9.

Interestingly, and at the same time confusing, many administrative units, entities responsible for civil defense are preparing extensive documentation on the preparation of civil liability, which shows that the state of this organization should be assessed as satisfactory. These are, however, appearances which, by masking the actual state of affairs, contribute only to lowering the level of universal security by consolidating the erroneous belief about the actual value of CD potential.

In the face of the presented state of civil defense in Poland, the question arises whether or not, and if so, how can the existing state of affairs be improved? The situation is so serious that any changes should, according to the authors, take the form of a system revolution. The next draft acts on civil protection, which would comprehensively regulate the security of civilians in the event of threats, do not seem to contain a good solution. Assigning the function of the Chief of National Civil Defense to the Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, which is the return to a previously working solution makes sense in a situation when its advisory and executive apparatus will be a newly created unit with appropriate substantive knowledge, and not the NHSFS, which is not interested in maintaining civilian defense efficiency. Certainly, this situation will not be improved by the nomination proposed in the draft for the deputy head of the NCD Chief Commander of the State Fire Service. In the context of these changes, even the extensive evolution of the organization's operating philosophy or far-reaching legal and organizational amendments will not improve its situation.

## PROPOSED REFORMS

Therefore, it is reasonable to ask if it is worth considering making a radical turn in thinking about CD. The existence of a crisis management system, the purpose of which is, *inter alia*, to protect civilians as a leading institutional entity in public administration, raises doubt as to the advisability of maintaining the current civil defense formula. This is contrary to the principle of Occam's Razor, which in the pursuit of maximum simplicity of systems requires the elimination of unnecessary entities. According to the authors, this is the way to proceed with CD, but without leading to its complete elimination, making a radical change in the way it works. For this purpose, one can use the assumptions of the model applicable in the United States. It is close because Americans noticed already at the turn of the 1950's and 1960's that the institutional form of CD – the Federal Civil Defense Administration was replaced by the Office of Civilian and Defense Mobilization and the educational programs,<sup>24</sup> implemented by these entities do not bring with great momentum expected result, even though they were directed at the then real threat associated with a potential nuclear conflict. Ultimately, the classic, institutional form of Civil Defense was abandoned after the end of the

<sup>24</sup> These include Operation Q, which promotes the principle of mass preparation of civilians, which became the slogan "Duck and cover" or the program "Alert America".

Cold War, when it began to operate in the form of broadly understood crisis management, capable of responding efficiently through the Federal Emergency Management Agency to threats that have the characteristics of natural and industrial disasters as well as terrorist events. However, it remained active as the American Civil Defense Association since 1962. It supports federal efforts for the safety of civilians through training activities, distribution of equipment and personal protective equipment as well as logistic facilities adapted to the needs of crisis situations among citizens.

The same opinion the authors have on the idea of changing the CD's operational mode. It consists in making the Civil Defense organization an institution of the state social association that would be able to support projects in the field of civil protection, implemented by the crisis management system and rescue services. This would eliminate the issues of competence and management problems of the CMS and CD organs, and by introducing the voluntary factor of belonging to civil liability, one could expect a significant improvement in the effectiveness of its operation, due to the fact that it involves people convinced of the legitimacy of their actions, enthusiasts guided by a sense of mission. Of course, this would require the involvement of authorities and controlled funding for civil defense activities. Its scope of responsibility should include, first of all, projects related to the promotion of civil society security issues among citizens, training them in safe behavior in an emergency, as well as projects related to the distribution of personal protective equipment, such as dosimeters, gas masks, protective clothing and dry rations. A forum for exchanging ideas and promoting knowledge about civil liability could remain the periodical "Civil Defense Review". In peacetime, such a solution will allow for a clear division and integration of projects related to civil protection and rescue carried out by all entities authorized to do so. However, during a threat of war it will not be an obstacle to use all entities and forces dealing with the security of civilians as a "civil defense organization" in accordance with the provisions of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions.

## SUMMARY

The presented considerations were an attempt to diagnose the state of civil defense in Poland. They show that it is now in a deep collapse, which has been caused by decades of reckless approach to it as a major rescue force. Present attempts to improve its condition seem to be ineffective. The way out of this situation is therefore a radical change in the formula of CD action. It seems that this type of solution will allow for fully functional cooperation of all entities implementing projects in the field of civil protection and will enable the final settlement of the dispute between the crisis management system and civil defense. It will also allow the optimal and adequate use of its potential, with the conscious and responsible involvement of management and all members of civil liability, to ensure comprehensive protection of civilians.

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